

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 3145

E.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJ: US-EGYPTIAN COOPERATION IN HEALTH PROGRAMS

REF: GENEVA 2970

1. HAVE SEEN EGYPTIAN HEALTH MINISTER MAHFOUZ SEVERAL TIMES ON VARIOUS MATTERS. AS REFTEL SUGGESTS, HE IS INTERESTED IN US-EGYPTIAN COOPERATION IN HEALTH PROGRAM.
2. SPECIFICALLY, HE HAS TWO MAJOR PROJECTS IN MIND. ONE IS TO MAKE THE PRESENT AGOUZA HOSPITAL IN CAIRO INTO A US-EGYPTIAN MEDICAL CENTER AND POST-GRADUATE MEDICAL SCHOOL. THE AGOUZA HOSPITAL IS A GOOD HOSPITAL BY EGYPTIAN STANDARDS AND HAS ABOUT 900 BEDS. HE WOULD LIKE UNITED STATES HELP IN PROVIDING FUNDS, EQUIPMENT AND PERSONNEL FOR THIS PURPOSE. HE BELIEVES THAT SOME OF OUR PL-480 HOLDINGS SHOULD BE USED FOR THIS PURPOSE.
3. A SECOND RELATED IDEA IS TO MAKE THE PRESENT NASSER (MEDICAL) INSTITUTE NOW UNDER CONSTRUCTION ON THE ROAD TO ALEXANDRIA INTO A JOINT US-EGYPTIAN MEDICAL INSTITUTE. IT IS CURRENTLY PLANNED FOR 250 BEDS AND INTENDED INITIALLY FOR DIABETIC PATIENTS. IT COULD SUBSEQUENTLY BE EXPANDED INTO OTHER MEDICAL SPECIALITIES.
4. MAHFOUZ'S PURPOSE IS TO INCREASE THE RATIO OF EGYPTIAN
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GENERAL PRACTITIONERS TO SPECIALISTS FROM THE PRESENT

4 - 1.2 TO APPROXIMATELY 2 - 1. MAHFOUZ POINTS OUT THAT 3500 EGYPTIAN DOCTORS ARE GRADUATED EACH YEAR AND THAT THIS POOL OF POTENTIAL TALENT URGENTLY REQUIRES POST-GRADUATE SPECIALIST TRAINING IF EGYPT'S GROWING MEDICAL NEEDS ARE TO BE ADEQUATELY FULFILLED.

5. HIS ESTIMATED COST OF THE ABOVE, AND I DO NOT KNOW ON WHAT HE BASES IT, IS BETWEEN 10 AND 20 MILLION EGYPTIAN POUNDS. IN ADDITION TO EGYPTIAN POUNDS, HOWEVER, HE WOULD LIKE DOLLAR ASSISTANCE TO PERMIT THE IMPORTATION OF NEEDED MEDICAL RESEARCH EQUIPMENT WHICH CAN ONLY BE PURCHASED WITH HARD CURRENCY.

6. I HAVE ASKED MAHFOUZ HOW THE ABOVE HOSPITALS/MEDICAL CENTERS FIT INTO THE GOE OVERALL DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT AND WHAT PRIORITY THEY HAVE. HE RESPONDED IN GENERAL TERMS THAT HOSPITALS HAVE A HIGH PRIORITY. I HAVE NO INDICATION, HOWEVER, WHETHER DEPUTY PRIMIN HEGAZI HAS APPROVED MAHFOUZ'S IDEAS OR, IF SO, WHAT PRIORITY HE HAS ASSIGNED TO THEM. I TOLD MAHFOUZ THAT INCLUDED IN OUR TENTATIVE THINKING FOR THE USE OF THE DOLLARS 250 MILLION WE HAVE REQUESTED FROM THE CONGRESS FOR EGYPT ARE SOME HOSPITALS IN THE SUEZ CANAL AREA, WHICH, I UNDERSTOOD, HAS HIGHEST PRIORITY IN THE GOE'S REHABILITATION PLANNING.

7. COMMENT: ON THE SURFACE MAHFOUZ'S IDEAS OF TWO JOINT US-EGYPTIAN MEDICAL CENTERS SEEM WORTHWHILE. SUCH CENTERS WOULD PROBABLY HAVE CONSIDERABLE PUBLIC IMPACT HERE. IF THE MEANS ARE AVAILABLE TO DO SO, DEPT AND PERHAPS HEW MAY WISH TO CONSIDER WHETHER WE SHOULD ACTIVELY EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF COOPERATING WITH MAHFOUZ IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SUCH JOINT POST-GRADUATE MEDICAL CENTERS.
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